

## Japanese champion Charlie Ota makes American debut Saturday night in birthplace

*Martinez vs. Macklin, Rodriguez vs. George*



Charlie Ota

NEW YORK (March 14, 2012) - The circuitous journey for Charlie Ota (19-1, 13 KOs), aka Charles Bellamy, comes full circle Saturday night in New York City as the 30-year-old junior middleweight makes his American debut, ironically, in the city in which he was born, nearly 6,800 miles from where he lives in Tokyo.

Ota faces veteran Gundrick "Sho-Gun" King (16-7, 11 KOs) in an eight-round bout on the undercard of "THE REAL Middleweight Championship - Get Your Irish Up" card, presented by DiBella Entertainment, Saturday evening (St. Patrick's Day) in The Theater at Madison Square Garden.

The 12-round main event features World Middleweight Champion Sergio "Maravilla" Martinez (48-2-2, 27 KOs), *Ring Magazine's* No. 3 pound-for-pound fighter, defending against former European champion Matthew "Mack the Knife" Macklin (28-3, 19 KOs). Undefeated super middleweight contender Edwin "La Bomba" Rodriguez (20-0, 14 KOs) takes on Don "Da Bomb" George (22-1-1, 19 KOs) in the 10-round "Bombs Away" co-feature that has possible future world title shot implications. Martinez-Macklin and Rodriguez-George will both air live on HBO's "World Championship Boxing," starting at 10PM ET/7PM PT.

Tickets, priced at \$505, \$355, \$205, \$125 and \$65, are available to purchase through the Madison Square Garden Box Office, through Ticketmaster at [Ticketmaster.com](http://Ticketmaster.com) or by calling (866) 858-0008.

Call DiBella Entertainment at (212) 947-2577, visit [www.dbe1.com](http://www.dbe1.com) and @loudibella on Twitter for more information.

"Everybody's Irish on St. Patrick's Day, including Charlie, a kid from Harlem adopted by the people of Japan," show promoter Lou DiBella joked. "This is a unique homecoming for him, fighting halfway around the world, for the first time where he was born. Charlie is an exciting fighter who people are going to love to watch in action."

Ota was born in Harlem, where he lived for six years, eventually moving to South Carolina and then Maryland. In 2000, Charlie joined the U.S. Navy and chose to be stationed in Japan on the USS Gary, until being honorably discharged in 2004. Charlie briefly returned home to live in the United States but soon permanently moved to Japan. The only time he's left, until now for this fight, was after last year's devastating earthquake in Japan, returning home to Maryland to visit his mother and ensure family and friends that he was okay.

"Charlie came back because of the fight in him," his promoter Issei Nakaya remarked. "He has the patience and determination of a Japanese person. Charlie returned to Japan after our earthquake disaster and fought May 19 (2011) on a day called 'The Day of Boxing' by Japanese fans. It marks the day Japan's first world champion, Yoshio Shirai, won his title. I was very happy Charlie fought in the main event (W-TKO9 vs. Tadashi Yuba) on such a special day for Japanese boxing fans. He fought not only for himself, but for all Japanese who had suffered huge damages. I'd like to thank Lou DiBella for giving Charlie a chance to further his boxing career and represent Japan on this great U.S. show."

Originally, Charlie started taking college classes to work in Japan as an English tutor/teacher, and he soon found a nearby gym (Hachioji Nakaya Boxing Gym) to work out and keep in shape. "I decided to take up boxing and soon became pretty good at it," Ota explained. "Growing up, I always did a lot of fight training with a friend. Even in the military, I would hang a punching bag up in the helicopter hangar to work out. I soon became pretty good at it and decided to turn pro and see how far I'd go in boxing. I'm very happy that I got a chance to really see Japan and become a fighter at the same time. When I first came to Japan, I was on a ship that was often at sea, so I didn't get to really see Japan until I moved there."

Ota has done very well in the ring, too, capturing the Oriental and Pacific Boxing Federation ("OPBF") and Japanese junior middleweight titles two years ago, followed by six successful title defenses, and he is presently rated No. 9 by the World Boxing Association ("WBA"), as well as No. 19 by the World Boxing Council ("WBC").

"I started boxing at 24," Ota added. "I had to put school on hold to box. I remember a lot of people telling me I was too old and that it was too late for me to be a professional boxer. I believed in my ability and wanted to see for myself. I'm happy with my success so far and still believe the best is yet to come."

Charlie Ota may turn out to be the best thing from Japan to hit New York City since sushi.

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DiBella Entertainment builds upon the unique insights Lou DiBella developed as a television executive and matchmaker to combat the contractual exploitation of professional boxers. DiBella Entertainment creates a business model that shifts the balance of power from promoters to boxers; and establishes a legacy of matchmaking excellence, both in an effort to improve the health of the boxing industry. DiBella Entertainment represents its athletes with honesty and integrity all while making the best and fairest financial deals for its clients.

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